

Heritage Education Update

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Heritage Education in Loranger, La.

Paul Stuker, an eighth grade American History teacher at Loranger Middle School in Loranger, Louisiana, was chosen along with fifteen other teachers to participate in the development of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training's (NCPTT) *Heritage Education-Louisiana*, a program dedicated to enhancing education and fostering an appreciation of Louisiana's rich cultural resources.

Stuker brought to the program an impressive array of credentials, including Social Studies Chairperson, Eighth Grade Chairperson, and Title II Eisenhower Professional Development for Social Studies contact person for his school. His role in the *Heritage Education-Louisiana* program included attending teacher workshops and a five-day summer institute held at the NCPTT in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

The workshops provided presentations and field trips to help the teachers develop curriculum-based lesson plans centered on Louisiana's rich heritage of archeological sites, cultural landscapes, and historic structures. Guest speakers from Northwestern State University's College of Education, the Louisiana State Board of Education, and the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development, guided the teachers through the lesson plan process. Each teacher was then tasked to develop three lesson plans for the *Heritage Education-Louisiana* program.

Armed with information and resources, Paul created "Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery: The Battle of New Orleans", "The Birth of a Town: Hammond," and "Historic Camp Moore: A Civil War Training Facility."

By using sites close to home, Paul enhanced the educational experience

for his students and gave them a greater appreciation of local history. He says the program has greatly benefited his students: "*Heritage Education-Louisiana* encourages practical and productive use of technology. Also, the students' excitement and interest in the lessons motivated them to share and discuss what they had learned with family members. I would call the program an absolute success."

Melissa M. Stilley, the principal of Loranger Middle School in Tangipahoa Parish, has high praise for the program and for Paul. "The *Heritage Education-Louisiana* program has been extremely successful in enhancing



Paul Stuker, along with Angel White of Ferriday Junior High (left) and Susan Lambert of West Feliciana Middle (right), participated in the development of *Heritage Education - Louisiana*.

academic achievement and developing a sense of value in Louisiana's historic places," she stated. "Mr. Stuker has done a super job implementing the ideas and strategies of the program into his classroom."

The students are equally adamant in their praise of the program. According to one, "This is a great program. Everyone needs to know about the past—it helps us take care of the future." Another stated, "By researching our local area, I have learned how much Louisiana and our community have contributed to our nation's history."

Welcome...

to *Heritage Education Update*, a newsletter providing information about heritage education in Louisiana and throughout the nation.

The Heritage Education Initiative is an endeavor of the National Park Service to bring the American experience alive to our children, creating an appreciation and understanding of the peoples, places and traditions that have shaped our nation, through innovative methods of teaching and learning.

Heritage Education-Louisiana is the pilot program for this national initiative which encourages the use of local resources such as archeological sites, historic structures, and cultural landscapes in developing curriculum-based lessons and activities for students and fostering an appreciation of shared history and heritage.

This issue introduces one of the teachers who helped develop the program, offers tips for a cemetery visit, and provides information about other heritage education activities and programs.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for this newsletter, please let us know.



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Heritage Ed Web Resources

www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/

Teaching with Historic Places has created a variety of products and activities that help teachers bring historic places into the classroom.

www.crt.state.la.us

The Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism offers a rich resource to teachers by providing information about archeology, historic preservation, state museums, state parks, arts and government.

Learning from the Dead: It's More Than Just a History Lesson

By ElizaBeth Bede Guin
DuPont Research Fellow, NCPPT

Graveyards can be excellent resources for studying art, language, social and family history, cultural landscapes, and even the natural sciences. Many activities can make a cemetery "come alive" for students and instill a respect for this important resource while also being educational. Lynette Strangstad, in *A Graveyard Preservation Primer*, suggests:

An English lesson: Students seek out nonstandard spellings of words and archaic words or phrases, clear evidence of our changing language.

A history lesson: Students identify historical facts or personages on the stones themselves or research the personal history of an individual or family.

An art lesson: Students identify artwork common to many stones; photograph the stones; create original artwork using motifs found on the stones; discuss the symbolism.

A sociology lesson: Students gather data such as number of births or deaths, average lifespan, cause of death, most popular first and last name, and popular carving motifs in a particular decade.

A geology lesson: Students



National Park Service Ranger Rick Gupman and Youth Conservation Corp members assist with gravemarker surveys at the historic American Cemetery located in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The cemetery is undergoing a conditions survey by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training under the direction of ElizaBeth Bede Guin.

identify the variety of stone represented, examining typical characteristics of each type or unusual features.

Even though cemeteries are plentiful, they still must be viewed not only with respect for the dead, but also as outdoor museums. Here are a few preservation tips to keep in mind:

Cleaning: Often, a general cleanup of trash, and discarded flowers, can be helpful before beginning lessons and activities. Remember that some cultures have traditions that may differ a bit from your own; each tradition should be respected.

Vegetation: Clearing gravesites

of vegetation and cutting back trees and shrubs is essential for preservation. Repeated brushing of branches over gravemarkers can cause the loss of inscriptions, and overgrown plants may cause the stone to decay.

Headstones: Gravemarkers are archeological artifacts, and only a professional should undertake preservation of these items. Dusting with a soft-bristle brush is permitted, but never use a wire brush. Removing imbedded moss or other vegetation can result in significant stone loss.

Reading: The most effective and least detrimental way to read a gravestone is to use a flashlight causing light and shadow. Rubbings are a popular method to read inscriptions, but the pressure from rubbings and residue left by the rubbing materials cause significant damage to the stone.

General: Gravestones may be more fragile or unsound than they appear; sitting or standing on stones could result in serious damage to both the visitor and to the stones. Also be alert to the local wildlife and the often uneven terrain of a cemetery.

The Association for Gravestone Studies is a non-profit organization that provides information about cemetery preservation and can be reached at (413) 772-0836 or 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301.



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Heritage Education Workshops

In partnership with Northwestern State University of Louisiana, *Heritage Education-Louisiana* offers workshops designed to aid teachers in developing innovative methods for teaching heritage education in the classroom.

Teachers learn how to use local cultural resources to create lessons and activities that meet curriculum needs for Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. The three-day summer workshops provide

hands-on activities, field trips, information packets, online and printed resources, and supplies. For more information, contact Kim Bowen, Heritage Education Assistant, at kim_bowen@contractor.nps.gov or (318) 356-7444.

Mini Grants

Heritage Education-Louisiana offers a Mini Grants Program for teachers. This program provides a maximum of \$2,500 per grant to classroom teachers for development of curricu-

lum-based heritage education lessons and activities using local cultural resources as content. Selected proposals will encourage appreciation of Louisiana's historic structures such as buildings or bridges, archeological sites such as Poverty Point, and/or cultural landscapes such as farm settings or cemeteries, while enhancing education. For more information, contact Kim Bowen, Heritage Education Assistant, (318) 356-7444 or kim_bowen@contractor.nps.gov.